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TAGS: PREL PGOV ECON EAID IZ

SUBJECT: EPRT FALLUJAH: CITY COUNCIL BECOMING LEGITIMATE FORCE IN FALLUJAH

Classified By: ePRT Fallujah Team Leader Steve Fakan
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (U) This is a joint ePRT Fallujah/POL reporting cable.

¶2. (C) Summary: Nearly non-existent only eight short months ago, the Fallujah City Council (FCC) is developing into a legitimate governing force that is building political capacity and driving economic development in Fallujah. The Council's combined leadership of Mayor Sa'ad Awad Rashid al-Dulaimi and City Council Chair Sheikh Hamid Ahmad Hashim al-Alwani comprise a capable one-two punch, whose impact is being felt beyond Fallujah's city limits. Security remains a top priority for the Council. As Iraqi Security Forces, with assistance from Coalition Forces (CF) and Concerned Local Citizens (CLC) groups, continue to make security gains, Council members are engaging more to resolve infrastructure and service delivery problems. To combat pervasive corruption in the contracting process, the Council has developed more transparent procedures to vet prospective contractors for USG funded-projects. It also has shown its potential to wield influence with the provincial government in Ramadi. Stood up with assistance from Coalition and ePRT officials in May 2007, the Council is moving closer to establishing itself as the principal link between provincial and sub-district governments. End Summary.

¶3. (SBU) Virtually non-existent only eight short months ago, the FCC is developing into a capable and influential political organization under the combined leadership of Mayor Sa'ad Awad Rashid al-Dulaimi and Council Chair Sheikh Hamid Ahmad Hashim al-Alwani. Meeting bi-weekly, the Council exhibits an increasingly responsive attitude to city residents, needs and concerns. During a recent Council meeting, members discussed how to resolve problems with school reconstruction projects and ensure they have appropriate oversight and are completed in a timely fashion. Members also insisted that the Council address a recent outbreak of a lung virus that has hospitalized large numbers of young people.

¶4. (SBU) The Council also has assumed greater responsibility for oversight of the contracting process. It now is an active participant in all USG funded-projects (Commander Emergency Response Project or Quick Relief Funds (CERP and QRF)). To ensure greater transparency, the Council has formed a diverse engineering committee, comprised of representatives from the mayor's office, Iraqi Police (IP), tribal sheikhs, and the appropriate director generals (DG), to prioritize projects, vet potential contractors, determine the scope of work, provide oversight of the work, and verify its completion.

¶5. (C) The Council also appears to be gaining influence with provincial officials in Ramadi. Recently, when Fallujah city officials became disenchanted with the performance of the local director general (DG) of education, they were able to sway the provincial DG of Education to remove him from

office. The FCC also formed a selection committee, and nominated a successor that was eventually selected by the Provincial DG.

¶6. (C) Comment: The FCC has made considerable progress in only the few short months since it was stood up with Coalition and ePRT assistance. EPRT officials monitoring its development have witnessed impressive progress in the Council's ability to promote development in Fallujah and confront the many formidable challenges. The combined leadership of Mayor Sa'ad and Sheikh Hamid has proven effective, as the younger, less experienced Sa'ad has drawn on the sage advice and mentoring of elder statesman Sheikh Hamid. Council members exhibit a propensity to conduct city business with council members debating with fellow colleagues and challenging the Mayor and Council Chairman in wide-ranging lively debates. End Comment.

¶7. (SBU) BIO NOTE: Mayor Sa'ad Awad Rashid al-Dulaimi became Mayor of Fallujah on March 28, 2007 after city council members voted him into office out of five nominees. Sa'ad replaced the previous Mayor Jassim, who was removed from office when he was detained on corruption and insurgent activity charges. In his late thirties, Sa'ad is relatively inexperienced and still learning his role as mayor. EPRT officials observe that he is soft spoken and most effective in small groups in his office. Previously, Mayor Sa'ad was a social studies teacher.

¶8. (SBU) BIO NOTE: City Council Chairman Sheikh Hamid Ahmad Hashim al-Alwani was originally selected to the FCC as a representative from the Albu Alwan tribe. He became Chairman of the Council after the assassination of the three previous chairmen, when he was the only person willing to assume the

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chairman's position. Sheikh Hamid is a former high school chemistry teacher and owns a trucking company. Sheikh Hamid has been associated with the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP), but does not appear to have a close relationship with Anbar Governor Ma'amoun even though they are from the same tribe.
CROCKER